Oadby & Wigston BOROUGH COUNCIL

Law & Democracy
Democratic Services

TO COUNCILLOR:

Mrs R H Adams	J Kaufman	Mrs S B Morris (Chair)
Mrs L M Broadley	Mrs L Kaufman	
Miss P V Joshi	C D Kozlowski	

Dear Sir or Madam

I hereby **SUMMON** you to attend a meeting of the **PEOPLE COMMITTEE** to be held **COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON** on **THURSDAY, 1 JULY 2021** at **6.30 PM** for the transaction of the business set out in the Agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Council Offices
Wigston
23 June 2021

Anne E Court.

Mrs Anne E Court
Chief Executive

IMPORTANT COVID-19 NOTICE

In-person Council and Committee meetings which are open to the press and public to observe have resumed from 7 May 2021 following the expiry of the Regulations that allowed local authorities to hold remote meetings.

Whilst most of these meetings will take place in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices in Wigston, it may be necessary to host a meeting at an alternative venue and/or at short notice. This will allow all attendees to maintain social distancing and follow the latest COVID-secure guidelines.

If attending an in-person meeting, all attendees must wear a face covering (unless exempt or when seated) and must sanitise their hands on entry and exit to/from the meeting venue. Meeting venue capacity will be severely restricted due to COVID-19 regulations, however there will still be opportunities for public participation in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Where the necessary technology is available and working, the press and public may still be able to watch the live webcasts of meetings without having to attend in-person. Instructions on how to access live webcasts can be found below where applicable. At a minimum, audio recordings of meetings will be made available on the Council's website shortly after any given meeting.

ITEM NO.   **AGENDA**   **PAGE NO'S**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   To receive apologies for absence from Members to determine the quorum of the meeting in accordance with Rule 7 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

2. **Appointment of Substitutes**

Customer Service Centre: 40 Bell Street, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 1AD
Council Offices: Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR
Tel: (0116) 288 8961   **Fax:** (0116) 288 7828

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To appoint substitute Members in accordance with Rule 26 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Substitution Procedure Rules.

3.   Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that any declaration of interest should be made having regard to the Members' Code of Conduct. In particular, Members must make clear the nature of the interest and whether it is 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary'.

To read, confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting in accordance with Rule 19 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

5.   Action List Arising from the Previous Meeting

There was no Action List arising from the previous meeting.

6.   Petitions and Deputations

To receive any Petitions and, or, Deputations in accordance with Rule(s) 11 and 12 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Petitions Procedure Rules respectively.

Report of the People Manager

For more information, please contact:

**You can access all available public meeting documents
and audio-visual live streams and recordings electronically on:**

Our website **oadby-wigston.gov.uk** under **'Your Council'** and **'Meeting Dates, Agendas & Minutes'**	Your smart **iPad**, **Android** or **Windows** tablet device with the **'Modern.Gov'** app	Our **YouTube** Channel **ow.ly/FYQW50zDNkc** or smart device with the **'YouTube'** app (facilitated by **'Zoom'**)	Our audio platform **soundcloud.com/ oadbywigstonbc** or smart device with the **'SoundCloud'** app

People Committee
Thursday, 1 July 2021

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Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Council Offices,
Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2DR*

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE HELD AT THE BY REMOTE VIDEO CONFERENCE (SEE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW) ON THURSDAY, 18 MARCH 2021 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT

Mrs L M Broadley   Chair

COUNCILLORS

J Kaufman
Mrs L Kaufman
C D Kozlowski
Mrs S B Morris

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

S J Ball	Assistant Solicitor
Miss E Byrne	Democratic Services Officer
Mrs A E Court	Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Ms V Hewitt	People Manager

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

9.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

10.   APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

None.

11.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 03 December 2020 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

13.   ACTIONS LIST ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The Action List arising from the previous meeting held on 03 December 2020 be noted.

14.   **PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None.

15.   **PEOPLE UPDATE (Q1 - Q3 2020/21)**

The Committee gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 9-16 of the agenda, which asked it to note the management information and statistics for ill-health absence, employment relations cases and staff turnover during the first, second and third quarters of 2020/21.

The Committee requested that information regarding internal restructuring, leavers rates and figures for work-related stress be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by J Kaufman and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The content of the report be noted.

16.   **REVIEW OF HR POLICIES AND STRATEGIES (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Committee gave consideration to the verbal update, delivered and summarised by the People Manager.

It was confirmed that there are a number of policy documents currently being drafted, including policies in relation to disciplinary, capability, grievance, recruitment & selection and agile working. Once drafts have been finalised these policies will be circulated to Members for review.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The content of the verbal update be noted.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.29 PM

✍

Chair

Thursday, 1 July 2021

Printed and published by Democratic Services, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2DR

	People Committee	**Thursday, 01 July 2021**	**Matter for Information and Decision**

Report Title: Report Title (Q4 2021 and People Team update)

Report Author(s):   Vicki Hewitt (People Manager)

Purpose of Report:	To provide an overview of Q4 key HR statistics. To report on current projects and recruitment.
Report Summary:	The report sets out latest management information and statistics for ill-health absence, employment relations and staff turnover.
Recommendation(s)	**That the content of the report be noted**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Anne Court (Chief Executive/ Head of paid service) (0116) 257 2602 anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Vicki Hewitt (People Manager) (0116) 257 2721 vicki.hewitt@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Providing Excellent Services (C03)
Vision and Values:	Accountability V1 Respect V2 Teamwork V3 Innovation V4 Customer Focus V5
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.

Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	Appendix 1- Agile Working Policy

1. Workforce Report

1.1 This report looks at the workforce profile of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council during the 4th quarter of the financial year 2020/2021 1st January 2021- 31st March 2021. The key findings were as follows:

1.2 **Headcount**

Q4's headcount was 169 (FTE 161.31), up by 5 from Q3. This has been due to recruitment for Planning, Revenues and Benefits, customer services, COVID support and any replacements.

1.3 **Sickness Levels**

Average sickness levels in Q4 (.91 days lost per FTE) which had decreased from Q3 (1.87 days lost per FTE).

1.4 **Days Lost**

The total number of days lost in Q4 (156) compared to Q3 where it was (271.5).

Total days of long term sickness lost in Q4 (23 days) which has significantly reduced from Q3 (83).

Total number of employees absent due to long-term sickness in Q4 is 1. COVID is not included in this data due to government guidance. We have 2 members of staff absent with Long COVID in Q4.

2. Employee Profile
2.1 Headcount & FTE

Figures do not include agency staff or contractors.

2.2 Leavers

During Q4 10, staff left the Council. No specific reason to why anyone left other than career progression mainly. Exit interviews are always offered.

Service	Q4 Leavers
Built Environment	1
Community & Wellbeing	2
Law & Democracy	1
Customer Services	3
People Team	2
Finance and Resources	1
SLT	0
Totals	10

This shows an increase from Q3 where there were 8 leavers.

2.3 Turnover

Turnover measures the percentage of employees who leave an organisation over a period of time. The table below shows the employee turnover across the council for Q4 and Q3.

	Q4	Q3
Leavers	10	8
Headcount	169	164
Turnover	6.5%	4.9%

Usual turnover is between 12-15 %

From Q4 we introduced a new corporate induction for all new starters, which has been received well from all new starters so far. This is to help retain and develop talented employees and reduce turnover.
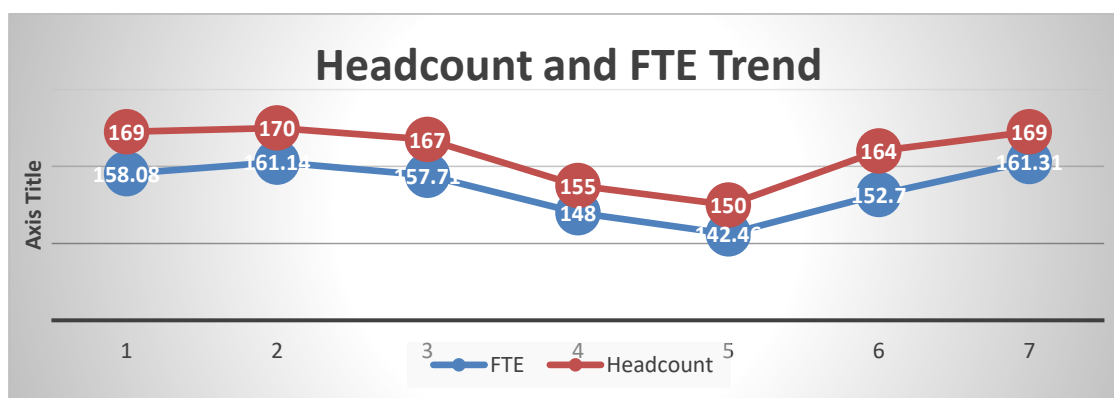
3. Sickness Absence

3.1 Q4 sickness stats

January 2021 Sickness Stats

Service Area	Total FTE	Long term	Short term	Total days	Average days per FTE
Customer Services	22.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Finance and Resources	27.63	0.00	9.00	9.00	0.29
Community and Wellbeing	53.54	0.00	41.00	41.00	0.70
Built Environment	35.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Democracy	19.70	0.00	24.00	24.00	1.22
SLT	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
People team	2.61	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Grand total	**164.99**	**0.00**	**75.00**	**75.00**	**0.44**

February 2021 Sickness Stats

Service Area	Total FTE	Long term	Short term	Total days	Average days per FTE
Customer Services	25.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Finance and Resources	28.60	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.03
Community and Wellbeing	52.54	0.00	44.00	44.00	0.84
Built Environment	35.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Democracy	19.71	0.00	10.00	10.00	0.51
SLT	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

	Total FTE	Long term	Short term	Total days	Average days per FTE
People team	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand total	**168.90**	**0.00**	**55.00**	**55.00**	**0.32**

March 2021 Sickness Stats

Service Area	Total FTE	Long term	Short term	Total days	Average days per FTE
Customer Services	25.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Finance and Resources	28.02	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.07
Community and Wellbeing	52.54	23.00	18.00	41.00	0.78
Built Environment	35.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Law and Democracy	20.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SLT	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
People team	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand total	**169.31**	**23.00**	**20.00**	**26.00**	**0.85**

Long-term sickness absence is defined as a continuous period of absence exceeding 20 working days or more. Short-term sickness is any period less than 20 working days. Trigger points are used to manage absence and highlight levels and patterns of sickness absence. All employees who have been absent have a return to work interview within 24 hours of them returning.

3.2 Sickness Stats Q4 v Q3

	Month	Total FTE	Long Term	Short Term	Total Days	Ave. days Per FTE/ mth	Cum. Figure (YTD)	Cum. Figure (Qtr)
Q1	Apr-20	158.39	30.0	45.0	75.0	0.47	0.47	0.47
	May-20	155.97	0	48.0	48.0	0.31	0.78	0.78
	June-20	153.87	20.0	55.0	75.0	0.49	1.27	1.27
Q2	July-20	155.53	54.0	52.5	106.5	0.68	1.95	0.68
	Aug-20	156.59	43.0	37.0	80.0	0.51	2.46	1.19
	Sep-20	158.08	52.0	85.0	137.0	0.87	3.33	2.06
Q3	Oct-20	161.20	115.0	80.0	195.0	1.21	4.54	1.21
	Nov-20	163.20	100.0	48.5	148.5	0.91	5.45	2.12
	Dec-20	161.14	48.0	50.0	98.0	0.61	6.06	2.73
Q4	Jan -21	164.99	0	75	75	0.45	6.51	0.45
	Feb- 21	168.90	0	55	55	0.33	6.84	0.78
	Mar- 21	169.31	23	20	26	0.85	7.69	1.63

3.3 Coronavirus

In the above reporting, no employees who had contracted COVID have been included in the data. The 2 members of staff that were absent during quarter 3 have still been absent during quarter 4 due to Long COVID.

Any staff who are absent from work are always offered the occupational health service and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is confidential.

During COVID health and wellbeing has been something at the forefront of the Council's employee relations. We have continued to communicate with all staff and help ensure staff have felt supported and engaged.

4.   Employee Relations

During quarter 4, we had 2 employees engaging in a capability programme and there were no disciplinary, grievances, Sickness meetings or tribunals during this quarter, which remained the same as quarter 3.

5.   HR Policy review

A number of polices have recently been reviewed as listed below. The changes have been mainly to the Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave Policy, which are now separate policies, and we have introduced a frequently asked questions page.
The Health and Wellbeing Policy we were going to introduce is now going to form part of the People Strategy. As a Council, we remain committed to employee health and wellbeing and will be running a wellbeing group during this month. We will be providing a range of opportunities, interventions, support to staff, to drive the development of a happy and motivated workforce. We aim to promote positive health and wellbeing to our employees. More details of this will be available in the coming weeks.

Another policy we will be introducing is a Menopause Policy. We recognise that many members of staff will experience the menopause and that for some the Menopause will have an adverse impact on their working lives. The purpose of the policy is to raise awareness of the menopause and the impact of the menopause in the workplace, and to encourage open conversations between managers and staff. We are committed to supporting staff who are affected by the menopause and to signpost relevant advice and assistance to anyone who needs it.

Policies Q1 2021 in review/New
1.   Employee Wellbeing Policy
2.   Equality and Dignity Policy
3.   Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Policy
4.   Disciplinary Policy
5.   Grievance Policy
6. Organisational Change Policy
7. Agile Working Policy
8. Sickness Absence Policy
9. Performance Management Policy
10. Recruitment Policy
11. People Strategy

6.   Agile Working Policy

We expect to see a home-working setting as the default workspace for many of our staff, only coming into offices where collaboration with others face-to-face for example, is a preference in order to deliver a better outcome.

The focus for working flexibly is work being something you do and not somewhere you go. It is about delivering agreed outcomes, as opposed to the number of hours worked. However, staff still have a total contracted number of hours and how these are worked will vary from person to person. The hours may differ from core business hours, be completed remotely or working in one of the Council or partner's buildings or vehicles and will require the use of both virtual and digital working.

Agile working is at the forefront of organisations now especially since the COVID pandemic and it has worked very well over the last year. Communication is key to all

staff to ensure that tasks and projects are completed. Managers will and have worked closely with all team members on a daily basis to ensure service delivery.

As a Council, we need to ensure we move with the times and we don't lose staff to being unable to work flexibly. It is about work life balance.

Attached in Appendix 1 is the drafted Agile Working Policy.

7. PeopleHR- New system

People HR is our new HRMS (Human Resources Management System). It is available to all employees Council wide and staff will have access to their HR profiles via an app on their mobile phones. They will be able to book annual leave, read the latest news internally, record sickness and update their training and development and so much more. Key information will be updated on here and staff will receive notifications so nothing has gone unmissed.

This is key to ensuring the People team have a robust system to use to collate data on all of our employees from headcount, turnover, sickness and all types of workforce reports. It is a very user friendly system and it goes live on the 28th June to all staff.

8. Recruitment

Agency workers

Across the Council we currently have 10 agency workers with the exception of the depot, where we have to use agency staff frequently due to seasonal work and sickness to ensure service delivery. The 10 agency workers are working within our planning and housing teams due to staff leaving and short notice periods making it difficult to recruit t quickly. Due to an increase in regeneration work within all planning departments, permanent roles are harder to fill as candidates will use agencies, as they will pay higher for the skillset requirements. We are recruiting for permanent posts within the team and once appointed we will no longer use the agencies.

Due to the COVID work and business grants we have had to use some agency staff within the Revenue and Benefits team to keep on top of the high workload. We are recruiting for permanent staff currently. This has been a lot more difficult than anticipated due to skill shortages and lack of candidates.

Hard to fill roles

Development Control roles are in demand at the moment and many councils are recruiting for these roles. Agencies are beginning to charge higher fees to recruit and it is very much a candidate led market. Many development control officers have turned to contract only roles as they can get paid a substantial amount.

Adrian Thorpe, Head of Built Environment reported on the difficulties in recruiting staff in the members bulletin of 18 June when he informed members about the difficulties in recruitment of a permanent Development Control Manager and two permanent Development Control Officers to his team despite offering competitive salaries and career graded roles.

We are talking to various agencies to gain support with recruiting for these roles and have terms agreed with many of them now. We have the roles advertised on our own website, Indeed, they have been on CV library, employment hub but still we are struggling to gain a selection of CV'S. We will continue to persevere and keep looking at options we can utilise to recruit in for these roles

From Q1, we had a large amount of vacancies arise due to a mini restructure and normal levels of attrition.

We have spent £0 on agency fees for FTC and Permanent placements – below you will see the roles filled by using internal direct recruitment

Roles filled Since April 2021	What agency fee would have been (15-20%)
Finance Manager	£8,250 - £11,000
Cleaning Team Leader	£3,898 - £5,198
IT Security Manager	£6,131 - £8,175
IT Support Engineer	£3,601 - £4,802
Marketing & Communications Manager	£6.282 - £8,376
Revenue & Benefits Manager	£6,131 - £8,175
HR Admin FTC	£696 - £928 Per qtr (pro-rata)
Customer Service Improvement Officer	£3,013 - £4,018
TOTAL	£38,002 - £50,672 saved in agency fees

Internal Moves – New roles
We have been able to advertise roles internally where staff may have been on fixed term contracts, secondments & where staff have left. The roles below are where we have recruited within. This is an essential part of workforce planning and to develop staff within.

Benefit Assessor
Inclusion Officer
Community & Wellbeing Manager
Customer Service Improvement Manager
Senior Housing Options Officer
Customer Service Technical Officer
Cemetery Admin Assistant
Recovery Assistant
Planning Policy Assistant
Corporate Project Lead

Apprenticeships

At present, the apprenticeship levy is funding 4 apprenticeships.
2 New Apprentices and 2 existing employees upskilling.

Apprenticeship standard	Level
Business Admin	3
Business Admin	3
Housing/Property Management	3
Snr Housing/property management	4

Meetings are booked with all training providers to establish where everything is with apprenticeships. We will be working on getting a stronger process in place in relation to apprenticeships with more involvement from the People Team in making sure the programmes are running effectively and both apprentice and manager are supported throughout their journey.

On average, we pay £643 in to the levy per month and pay out for the 4 above apprentices £1232. There is a buffer amount in the levy account that is covering the difference for now; this will be from unspent levy from previous months.

One of our current apprentices has been successful in securing a permanent role with us as Customer Service Technical Officer.

9.   **Other business**

The People team will be working on training and development for existing and new managers joining the Council within quarter 2. We will be creating a managers manual to support them in their roles as managers to enable them to manage their teams more effectively. This will include sickness absence, return to work, on call rotas, 121's, appraisals, probation periods, recruitment process and much more.

All staff have just undergone their 6 monthly appraisals and work will be done to ensure all training and development requests are looked at and work will be done around learning and development in each department to help upskill, develop and help retain our employees.

OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGILE WORKING POLICY

2021

STRONGER TOGETHER

Policy Version Number: x   **Policy Author: xxxxx**
Committee Approval: **TU Approval: xxxxx**
GMB: **xxxxx**   **Unison: xxxxx**
EIA: **xxxxx**   **Date of Policy Review: xxxxx**
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Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Please refer to the FAQs for further guidance

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Agile Working Policy

1. Introduction

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in staff having to very quickly adapt to new ways of working. This rapid change in a short space of time provided us with the opportunity to reflect on how and where we work and to evaluate our overall approach to agile working and what this means for our people, the tools required to enable agile working and the impact of this on our future accommodation requirements.

We expect to see a home-working setting as the default workspace for many of our staff, only coming into offices where collaboration with others face-to-face for example, is a preference in order to deliver a better outcome.

This document covers how our employees can carry out their role in a agile way, balancing the needs of our customers, colleagues and team. The principles and guidelines captured here are the basic requirement for all staff. There may be further specific requirements agreed locally for some teams and for some staff the nature of their role means they are required to deliver a service from a specific location or at a specific time. The option for working flexibly is greatly reduced for these members of staff, however we will agree locally options to allow as much flexibility as possible for all staff.

The focus for working flexibly is work being something you do and not somewhere you go. It is about delivering agreed outcomes, as opposed to the number of hours worked. However, staff still have a total contracted number of hours and how these are worked will vary from person to person. The hours may differ from core business hours, be completed remotely or working in one of the Council or partner's buildings or vehicles and will require the use of both virtual and digital working.

Flexibility in working means there will not be a requirement for a formal flexi time scheme, however we understand for many staff this scheme is a helpful way to record and manage their hours. All our staff where their role allows are empowered to manage their hours of work to ensure customer needs and partner requirements are met and our agreed outcomes delivered.

Health and Wellbeing of all staff remains very important to us and any concerns or challenges, because of working more flexibly should be raised directly with your manager, and we do understand for some working from home is not feasible.

We are committed to providing the right tools wherever you may be working and have therefore agreed a set of worker profiles, which ensures we are able to have a set of standardised equipment for each profile.

Managers will agree with team members the best way to build and maintain a high performing team and all team members are expected to support and participate in any agreed activity or request related to this.

Agile Working Policy

2. AgileAgile Working Principles

At Oadby and Wigston AgileAgile Working is:

- Centred around our customer, balancing the needs of the customer, organisation, teams, and ourselves, to support the delivery of our agreed outcomes,
- Where work takes place at the most effective location and time, relevant to the outcome, and enables the need for collaboration and connectivity to be fulfilled,
- Respects and supports individual circumstances, concerns, and the changing needs of our staff, providing wellbeing support and development as required,
- Ensures consistency of approach in how we manage agile working, using pragmatism to accept that specifics may differ for each team, role, and person,
- Provides fit for purpose digital and virtual tools to enable the best delivery of services and interactions, automating processes and eliminating need for paper,
- Enables reduced carbon emissions and accommodation costs.

As an Organisation We Will…

- Provide training, equipment, and the tools required to fulfil your role effectively and efficiently,
- Support our managers to:
  - ensure safe and effective working practices can be easily understood and adhered to by you,
  - take accountability for team's progress and commitment to workplace culture,
  - manage individual requirements, including specifics such as reasonable adjustments and the needs of newly appointed staff,
  - undertake regular performance development conversations and be both intuitive and available to provide necessary support,
- Ensure information about the Council, your employment and specifics related to your role are kept up to date and easily accessible via a staff intranet,
- Provide as much notice and detail as possible about activities and duties which need to be completed at a specific location and time,
- Enable face to face collaboration to be completed in any suitable space appropriate to the confidentiality of the discussion,

As Staff We Will…

- Maintain positive communication and engagement within and across teams, including delivering virtual meetings and interactions in an appropriate manner,
- Ensure a working environment which is conducive to delivering our very best, meeting health & safety and working time directive requirements,
- Respect and support individual circumstances, participating in team activities, sharing learnings and best practice with colleagues,
- Manage our time to ensure delivery of agreed outcomes, sharing any challenges or concerns so a solution can be found,
- Work with our teams to ensure cover for our customers and colleagues, ensuring calendars and communication tools are effectively used,
- Agree as a team when we will have collaborative time and actively participate in this,
- Comply with ICT security and data protection requirements, taking care of all equipment provided,

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Agile Working Policy

3. Our approach to Agile Working

Work styles and agile working practices

In many cases, staff will blend different agile working options, according to the need of the tasks in hand. This involves a substantial move away from the idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single work pattern that is set in stone. It is important to take a team approach so that agile working arrangements can be planned to cover the service needs as well as promote more agile working arrangements for employees.

To consider the agile working arrangements which would be suitable for a specific role or team we will first analyse the tasks involved in the job role, in terms of how effectively they can be done at different times and in different locations. We will then consider the impact on teamwork and/ or customer service to agree the worker profile for each role.

The worker profile will be the same for every role in a team and enables the member of staff and their manager to be clear about how much flexibility there is to deliver a role. This is then overlaid with the individual personal preference as captured in the table below.

Worker profiles

Role type	Personal preference within role type	Detail
Hybrid role – a role which in the main can be completed in a flexible way – both in terms of location or hours	Hybrid and prefers to work in a fixed office location.	A person whose role can be conducted from various locations and although they may have some pre-determined hours/location requirements, the majority of their work can be completed in an agile way. However, they prefer to work from an office location.
	Hybrid and prefers to work from remote location.	A person whose role can be conducted from various locations and although they may have some pre-determined hours/location requirements, the majority of their work can be completed in an agile way. However, they prefer to work from a remote location.
Fixed job/role – a job that has to be completed during set hours and/or location	Fixed with pre-determined hours and/or work location.	A person whose role requires them to work pre-determined hours in a fixed place of work e.g. Cemetery team.
	Fixed with pre-determined hours and/or field-based locations.	A person whose role requires them to work pre-determined hours and can be asked to complete their work all over the Borough e.g. Waste, Repairs, Parks team

4. Agile Workspace

Working from a Oadby and Wigston building

Our new office accommodation will be set up with:
- Spaces for collaboration equipped with appropriate technology to connect virtually with remote colleagues/ customers and partners,
- Touch-down spaces for people working on the move,
- Special project areas,

A key constraint on the introduction of agile working is a perceived dependency on paper documents, storage, and other physical resources. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating paper are becoming less and less compelling in an age of electronic based working. The use of electronic processes and appropriate on-line storage and filing is essential to agile working, enabling more effective working from any location. Managers and staff should feel empowered to continuously challenge traditional and new approaches to work, making sure they are fit for purpose but do not suppress agile working practices.

Working agilely

We have three different forms of agile working available to our staff, the key ones are captured below:

Home - When employees are working from home, it is important that the home working environment is set up properly, your home must:

- provide you with a space which is free from interruptions and distractions,
- comply with the needs of the home workplace assessment,
- not be used as a work location for face to face (in person) meetings with members of the public,
- enable you to always keep all documents and information associated with council's business secure,
- have adequate insurance cover to enable you to work from home, the Council will not fund any additional premiums. *(refer FAQs for more information on this)*
- have no restrictions which would stop you working from home e.g., specific clauses in a mortgage or rental agreement,

Hub - work may be able to be carried out in 'third places', for example: client offices, organisational partners, shared offices, cafés, hotel lobbies, libraries and on public transport. Staff accessing the network via such external WiFi hotspots signals should always use the correct security procedures and be mindful of information security and confidentiality when working from alternative locations.

Roam - For some of our staff work is completed either on the move or from various sites. The main issues with working on the move relate to confidentiality, security, safety and health. Safety concerns relate both to personal security.

All staff should follow the lone worker policy (refer xxx) and whatever your work style, you should never give out your home address or personal phone number.

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5. Agile Teams

When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed, such as buddy schemes for new recruits, regular team meetings, staff briefings etc.

It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and for managers of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular conversations, or clues may be spotted in terms of performance. If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, and about providing the appropriate support to overcome the problem.

The aim in moving to agile working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact. Though they may no longer sit next to one another, the new technologies should allow much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before. Agile working will also support more effective cross-team working amongst services.

It is important to have clear expectations about what is to be done and about communications within the team. A team should ensure should there is:
- clear reporting structures,
- sharing of calendars and schedules,
- rigorous use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible,
- no member of the team disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g., in providing office cover or attending meetings,
- useful online communications, and etiquette in virtual meetings is followed,
- signposting and availability for phone contact or online discussion,
- fairness in use of space when in the office.

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6. Managing Agile Teams

Managing a agile workforce involves a new kind of dialogue with staff, based on clarity of expectations and good communications and much more trust.

Managing outputs/outcomes

Managers should obtain regular progress updates so they can monitor service delivery and performance as well as checking in on their team members. The frequency and method of these updates will depend on the type of work being carried out, but could include a mixture of:

- Review meetings/team meetings,
- Daily/weekly email updates,
- Video meetings,
- Scheduled catch ups.
- Regular 1:1 and regular review of objectives, behaviours and deadlines through performance conversations

Managing outputs and outcomes may be a different management style to what colleagues are used to. It is important that managers explore the different options above with their teams and develop solutions together which work best for the team, management and service users. This process should enable managers to gain employee support and commitment.

One of the major concerns that people have about agile working is about maintaining the integrity of teams and preventing isolation. Good communication planning can help overcome this as well as effective use of technologies for remote meetings using phone and video conferencing. Managers and staff should agree on the level of contact and how and when this contact will be made.

Further resources are available at xxx (would suggest link to your e-learning tool and intranet – where tools can be accessed e.g. virtual meeting etiquette etc)

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7. Agile Tools

Data security & Information Management (include if not covered in IT, security or data policy – if covered in other places, need to reference)

Maintaining the security of the information we work with is vital and those working remotely are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation, just as if they were working in a fixed council office.

Specifically:
- Confidential or sensitive conversations/work should not be carried out whilst in any public areas,
- Other individuals (including family members) should not have any access to personal data either on paper or as electronic records,
- All printed or other paper records must be safely locked away when not in use,
- Confidential waste should be disposed of in the normal way,
- All council data stored outside of the councils network, must only be stored on council systems and/or encrypted council owned devices. Council data must not be stored on any personal devices and/or staff should not send work related emails to their personal email address,
- If staff are using a Laptop or other portable device, they must be aware of the additional security risks if leaving this device unattended,
- If staff become aware of any loss of council data they must contact the xxxxxx

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that information is handled correctly and not used for personal benefit or gain.

Personal usage of equipment and technology

Please refer to our IT policy xxx

8. Agile Wellbeing

Health & Safety

The employer's duty of care is the same wherever employees are working, whether in the employer's workplace, at home, on the move or in some other working environment. In general, when it comes to health and safety, the aim has to be to enable rather than prohibit – that is to enable staff to work safely wherever is the most effective and efficient location to get the work done.

Employees also need to be responsible for ensuring their workstation is fit for purpose and that they follow the health & safety tips and guidelines provided. Further information can be found on the health and safety pages on the intranet: xxxx

It is a requirement that you complete the Workplace DSE workstation assessment form which should be returned to your line manager. To download the DSE assessment form for working at home, go to the Intranet and xxx

If you are working remotely then your comfort and safety is just as important as it is when working in an office. Using laptops for prolonged periods in an office or home office environment may require the use of a laptop stand and/or additional properly positioned screen, with a separate keyboard and mouse.

There are also some simple steps you can take to increase your physical wellbeing whilst working from home or remotely:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity,
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position,
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises,
- avoiding eye fatigue by for example changing focus,
- wiping down hard surfaces at the end and start of every working day.

Working hours

One of the benefits of agile working is that it can help create a positive work-life balance. For example, it can ease the daily commute and/or help employees manage family, caring or domestic responsibilities during lunch breaks or directly before and after they work. Staff should ensure that whilst working from home they do not work excessively long or low hours on a regular basis and should only work their contracted hours. More information can be found on the gov.uk website:

https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours.

Please also refer to the FAQ about working extra hours

Alongside other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace, agile working practices can reduce absence and in particular reduce stress. A significant proportion of absence from work is due to minor ailments that make the thought of commuting and sitting in an office with colleagues not feasible but manageable if working from home – being able to work from home on these occasions can have a significant impact on 'sick leave'. In these instances, employees should speak with their line manager to agree if working from home is a viable option; staff should not feel obliged to work from home if they are sick - if the staff member is not well enough to work from home, then the normal sickness absence procedure will apply. Staff should also ensure that annual leave is taken on a regular basis for their wellbeing and to ensure adequate rest.

Environmental sustainability

One of the primary components of the carbon footprint of work relates to travel. Travelling thousands of miles each year for work/ meetings that can be carried out using video or telephone conferencing is an unsustainable and unproductive thing to do. Decisions about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate can increase or reduce our need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources.

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